1: Jenness--57-58
116, 172, 341

(1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo

"The early explorers found stone huts on the islands of the Parry archipelago similar to those that are still used by the natives of Smith sound. (1) Mr. Stefansson discovered one of these huts near the mouth of the Kimiryuak river, but his Copper Eskimo companion was afraid to let him enter it --why I do not know, since other natives have frequently been inside. (2) Captain Bernard found another on Bell island not far from the ruins of the wood and sod houses of the western natives; he excavated the floor to the depth of about a foot, but found nothing but stones and a few seal-bones. Larger than either of these, according to the natives, is a stone hut at Tutukok, near Lady Franklin point. I was not able to examine any of these huts, but visited one on the top of Kikigarnak hill behind Locker point. In shape it resembled a truncated cone, built of flat slabs of dolomite laid roughly one on top of another. Its height was about 6 feet, while the inside diameter diminished gradually from 4 feet 6 inches at the bottom to 2 feet 6 inches at the top. There was a small door facing WSW., 2 feet 6 inches high and 1 foot 6 inches wide, the bottom being raised 1 foot 4 inches above the level of the floor.

"1. See C.R. Markham, p.169 et. seq."

"2. My Life with the Eskimo, p. 274 et seq.., 288; Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 297."

should be assigned to the same origin (stone being used because of the lack of driftwood), or whether they belong rather to that earlier people who have left similar remains round Hudson bay and in the Parry archipelago, must be left uncertain until the Copper Eskimo country and the adjacent regions have been more fully explored and we have more information concerning the distribution of these houses. (3)"

"3. The stone huts on Southampton island which were used for meat caches had no doorway, but were opened at the top (Boas, Bulletin IV, A. M. N. H., Vol. XV. p. 475). Captain Bernard tells me, however, that the natives of Adelaide peninsula build huts like those among the Copper Eskimos for trapping foxes. A bait of meat or fish or blubber is laid on the floor, the door closed, and the roof either opened, or closed with a lightly balanced stone that will cave in when the fox steps on it. Once the animal has entered the trap it is unable to escape. I cannot help thinking, however, that this is a secondary use, the structures being originally intended, perhaps, for meat-caches. The doorway would be convenient, but not absolutely essential."

From an architectural point of view the most interesting feature was the use of the cantilever principle in closing the roof. (3) The space to be covered was roughly circular, with a diameter of a little more than two feet. Apparently no single slab to hand was large enough, so the builders used several smaller slabs instead. Two sufficed to cover about half the space on the south side; another was laid over the northern segment, resting on the wall, and the interspace was filled in with two overlapping slabs. Both the roof and the sides had many chinks and openings through which the wind and rain could enter. A rude flooring had been laid with slabs of dolomite, and near the doorway, close to the outer walls, were two stone rings where some Eskimos had evidently set up their tents in shelter from the east wind. About fifteen yards to the northwest was a pillar of seven or eight dolomite slabs laid one on top of another, though with what object it is hard to imagine. Elsewhere,[58] on the summit of the same hill, was another tent-ring, with its hearth-stone close beside it, and a low wind-break of stones from behind which the country north and east could be scanned for several miles.

"3. Cf. Peary. The Secrets of Polar Travel, 1917, pp. 136-7."

Birds and animals had evidently been the latest occupants of the hut for we found their bones scattered both above and below the floor stones. The ground was frozen hard, and I had no time to stay and excavate. It is hardly possible that the structure could ever have been a dwelling, since there was barely room for a man even to squat inside. The natives gave varying accounts of its origin. Some said it was made by white men long ago, possibly Rae's party when it tried in vain to cross the strait to Victoria island. (1) Certainly if it was intended for an observation post looking out on the gulf to the east and south, no better site could have been chosen anywhere. Another version assigned it to the tornrin, the dwarf people who were driven underground by the Copper Eskimos long ago. (2) They were responsible, too, for a curious structure that we found on the plain behind Cape Lambert. It was made of large flat slabs of dolomite set on edge in the shape of a rectangle, about 8 feet long by 4 feet wide, and from 1 foot to 1 foot 6 inches high. It was unlike the remains of a Copper Eskimo camping-site, and may have been due to the western natives. Whether the stone houses

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"1. See Richardson, p. 178."

"2. Cf. Boas, Central Eskimo, p. 635; Meddelelser om Grønland, Vol. XXXIX, p. 688 et seq."

2: Stefansson--25-26 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
101, 116, 341

"The Copper Eskimo do not seem ever to have had any permanent houses, so far as we could ascertain from spending the summer in the neighborhood of the Coppermine and from making inquiries from the oldest men. In looking for a characteristic by which to differentiate the eastern from the western Eskimo, it may be difficult to find a better one than this, that the westerners built permanent dwellings of earth and wood while the easterners used only skin tents and snowhouses. If it shall be found, as I suspect, that the distribution of the larger western sled will coincide archaeologically [26] approximately with the area of earth and wood houses, and the long eastern sled with that of the absence of house ruins, these two features will differentiate the two regions with some clearness. So far as we know the big skin boat or umiak was also a characteristic of the western section and absent in the eastern, at least within the last century."